

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A support arm assembly, comprising:
a table mount;
an arm coupled to said table mount;
an end effector coupled to said arm, said end effector having a stationary jaw member, a retractable jaw member that moves relative to the stationary jaw member and a spring which biases the retractable jaw member toward the stationary jaw member coupled to a spring;
and

a heart stabilizer having a shaft, the shaft held between the retractable jaw member and the stationary jaw member by force of the spring~~by said jaw member of said end effector~~ without rotation of a threaded fastener.

Claims 2-3 (canceled).

4. (currently amended) The support arm of claim 1, wherein said arm is adjustable and includes a locking knob which locks the arm in a fixed position.

5. (original) The support arm of claim 1, wherein said table mount includes a jaw and a table knob.

6. (original) The support arm of claim 1, wherein said arm includes a first linkage, a second linkage coupled to said first linkage, and a third linkage coupled to said second linkage and said end effector.

7. (original) The support arm of claim 6, wherein said first linkage is adapted to move relative to said table mount.

8. (original) The support arm of claim 6, wherein said second linkage can move relative to said first linkage, said third linkage can move relative to said second linkage and said end effector can move relative to said third linkage.

9. (currently amended) The support arm of claim 1, wherein said end effector includes a channel that receives the shaft of the heart stabilizer.

10. (original) The support arm of claim 1, wherein said end effector includes a plate.

11. (previously presented) A support arm assembly, comprising:
a table mount adapted to be secured to the table;
a first linkage coupled to said table mount;
a second linkage pivotally coupled to said first linkage;
a third linkage pivotally coupled to said second linkage;
an end effector pivotally coupled to said third linkage ~~and, the end effector~~ having
a stationary jaw member, a retractable jaw member that moves relative to the stationary jaw member and a spring which biases the retractable jaw member toward the stationary jaw member
jaw member coupled to a spring; and
a heart stabilizer having a shaft, the shaft held between the retractable jaw member and the stationary jaw member by force of the spring ~~by said jaw member of said end effector~~ without rotation of a threaded fastener.

Claims 12-13 (canceled).

14. (original) The support arm of claim 11, further comprising a locking knob that can be manipulated to lock said first, second and third linkage arms.

15. (original) The support arm of claim 11, wherein said table mount includes a jaw and a table knob.

16. (previously presented) A method for coupling a heart stabilizer to a table, comprising:
mounting a support arm to the table;

adjusting a position of an end effector of the support arm, the end effector having a retractable jaw member;

retracting the jaw member, the retraction creates a spring force;

inserting a heart stabilizer into the end effector; and

releasing the jaw member so that the spring force returns the jaw member and secures the end effector to the heart stabilizer.

Claim 17 (canceled).

18. (original) The method of claim 16, wherein a first person holds the heart stabilizer while a second person couples the heart stabilizer to the end effector.

19. (currently amended) The method of claim 16, wherein ~~a first person holds and couples the heart stabilizer to the end effector.~~ adjusting the position of the end effector of the support arm, retracting the jaw member and releasing the jaw member is performed by one hand of a user while the inserting of the heart stabilizer into the end effector is performed by another hand of the user.

20. (currently amended) The method of claim 16, further comprising locking ~~wherein the adjusted support arm is locked~~ into an operating position.

21. (new) The method of claim 16, further comprising positioning a patient on the table, positioning the heart stabilizer in relation to a heart of the patient prior to the inserting step, and maintaining the position of the heart stabilizer during the inserting step.

22. (new) The method of claim 21, wherein the adjusting step is performed after positioning the heart stabilizer.

23. (new) The method of claim 16, wherein the end effector includes a stationary jaw member, the heart stabilizer includes a shaft and the inserting step comprises inserting the shaft between the retractable jaw member and the stationary jaw member.

24. (new) The support arm of claim 9, wherein the channel is sized to receive shafts having diameters in a range between 2 and 15 millimeters.

25. (new) The support arm of claim 9, wherein the channel is shaped to receive cylindrical shaped shafts.

26. (new) The support arm of claim 9, wherein the channel is shaped to receive square shaped shafts.